DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 139 199 EC 100 774

AUTHOR Kolucki, Barbara
TITLE New Avenues of Special Education Resources: Sesame Street Programming for the Exceptional Child.
PUB DATE Apr 77
NOTE 10p.; Paper presented at the Annual International Convention, The Council for Exceptional Children (55th, Atlanta, Georgia, April 11-15, 1977) ; For related document, see EC 100 773

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Educational Television; Exceptional Child Education; *Handicapped Children; *Mentally Handicapped; Preschool Education
IDENTIFIERS *Community Education Service; *Sesame Street

ABSTRACT

Described are activities of Community Education Services (CES) in providing Sesame Street programing designed for and featuring children with mental retardation and other developmental special needs. Supplementary materials provided by CES are noted to include training films for teachers and parents, an activity book, and special activity suggestions for reinforcing the segments designed for children with mental retardation. (SBH)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

ED139199

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

NEW AVENUES OF SPECIAL EDUCATION RESOURCES:

SESAME STREET PROGRAMING for the EXCEPTIONAL CHILD

BARBARA KOLUCKI

SPECIAL EDUCATION COORDINATOR

COMMUNITY EDUCATION SERVICES

CHILDREN'S TELEVISION WORKSHOP

Paper presented at The Council for Exceptional Children, Atlanta, Georgia, April 14, 1977.

EC100774

C E C PRESENTATION

I am the Special Education Coordinator for the division of the workshop, Community Education Services (CES). Basically, my responsibility is to insure that materials developed by CES are accessible and comprehensible to persons with developmental special needs.

The Community Education Services is the catalyst and connecting link for a broad spectrum of educational activities conducted in informal and formal educational settings designed to support and complement Children's Television Workshop (CTW) productions. Through it's national office in New York City and regional offices in five locations throughout the country, CES is the center of a network of community organizations, schools, hospitals and other institutions who are interested in actively employing CTW productions as educational resources. We can provide assistance to anyone working with children through a variety of means - conducting workshops, presentation such as this, serving as consultants, developing training films and dissemination of supplementary written material. Our goal is not to compete with you, rather to complement and supplement. We strive to provide you with resources, or suggestions on how to make both children and adults active, not passive viewers. By providing ideas for adult interaction-prior/during/and after the broadcast, we believe that our program can and should be adapted to coincide with the curriculum of the classroom and the Individual Program Plan for each child.

As soon as it is decided that our Sesame Street curriculum will be expanded to include another goal area, CES sets out to incorporate this

into our responsibilities. This was the case when the decision was made to begin programming which was designed for and featured children with Mental Retardation. CES began to inform viewers, parents, teachers and others serving children with Mental Retardation of the upcoming and existing programs. Workshops were held to familiarize these groups with the curriculum goals of Sesame Street, many of which are comparable to the skills and concepts taught in both special and early childhood centers. You'll note that although we shared priority information about the "Special" "Play To Grow" segments, we equally stressed the potential value of the entire show for children with developmental special needs. Regardless of level of functioning, television can offer many things - from simple visual and auditory stimulation to teaching abstract concepts. Our goal is to help both children and adults become enthusiastic, for we hypothesize that then, leisure time, which we all know is so abundant to our children, particularly those still institutionalized, can be used more effectively. Then also, the impact of our shows will be greater and teachers will be provided with one more supplementary teaching tool.

What is some of the specific information that the CES staff shares with those serving persons with developmental special needs? Much of the information is geared to help you become aware of unique features of Sesame Street, possible curriculum adaptations - all to help you better understand the show - and then transfer this knowledge into practical activities.

Examples include:

- We believe that our productions offer maximum modality input and serve as a vehichle for maximum modality output. Children can listen, view, verbalize, physically participate, engage in paper and pencil tasks, etc.

- It has been hypothesized that the unique technical features that are often seen on Sesame Street and The Electric Company (e.g., zooms, split screens, slow motion) have the capability of showing the process that is similar to what should be happening in our minds. For example, Zooms- single out something from a wider picture - or figure from ground - because it has something special to tell us. If this hypothesis is true, these techniques can be used to 1) teach the process that the child should be learning or 2) reinforce the correct mental process to children who know it already.

  Hopefully, then, the mastery of these skills can be transfered to non-television material.

- In addition to this, we feel that Sesame Street can benefit not only children with Mental Retardation, but also children with other developmental special needs, such as behavorial disorders, learning disabilities,

visual impairments and hearing impairments.

- Since our TV programming in non-threatening and and non-punitive , it has potential of reaching and affecting a child when at times, the human element fails. Hopefully then, it can serve as a motivating link which brings humans together who previsouly had difficulty communicating.

- We know that blind children rely, more than any other population of children with special needs on memory and imagination. Our supplementary written materials can both tell you when many of these segments will be aired and also give you suggestions for related activities.

- S.S. includes many segments on problem solving techniques and cooperation - skills beneficial to all children but particularly pertinent for children with physical disabilities.

- Children who are deaf or have hearing impairments have, as one model, Linda, who is our cast member from the Little Theatre of the Deaf.

  Linda is seen in some situations as a teacher - teaching simple signs, telling us how she handles

activities of daily living, such as knowing when a door bell rings, or how she speaks with her friends when it's dark. Linda is also seen in situations where she encounters many of the same problems we all have - looking for a job or simply being in a bad mood. Our objective is to portray Linda as an important/valuable human being who has, as we all do, different abilities and limitations. Signing is just one alternative means of communicating.

- Many of our children have experiential deficits. Sesame Street takes us to places we could never go ourselves. We not only share vicarious experiences, but also share feelings and emotions. Everyone is unique yet we are all the same in many ways, regardless of backgrounds, ability or disability.

Special education (and all education), prides itself in qualities that are inherent to Sesame Street - adaptability, repetition, reinforcement and individualization. We hope our program can provide many experiences at multi-levels - all to attempt to meet some of the needs of multi children.

I'll like to share with you now, some of the supplementary materials CES provides:

- Training Films - for teachers and parents

- Script Highlights - a kind of broadcast guide for each show
- Activity Book - suggested activities (in English -&- Spanish
- Special Activities Section - in this piece, we attempt to link the educational content of the show with a series of reinforcing activities, which can be conducted prior/during/after the show or any time which best complements your daily schedule.

Each Special Activities Section is divided into two (2) parts; I) Suggested Ideas and Activities for Reinforcing the Segments Designed for Children with Mental Retardation II) General Suggestions on how you can increase each child's attention to the entire show and comprehension of of goals being presented.

Examples of these include:

- Activities which can help children focus on key information presented - or - the "revelant dimensions".
- Suggestions for modification - or - expansion, if the intended goal is either too difficult or too simple.
- If a segment teaches a skill via one modality (e.g, Up in the Feather Game - was a physical activity),

we will suggest ways of teaching the same concept via other physical or tactile experiences as well as fine motor, visual and auditory experiences.

- It also includes suggestions which point out stimuli on Sesame Street which are overlooked or usually not understood. For example; special sound effects are often heard and each of them signifies an important aspect of the segment. We have a ding of recognition that signifies "ah-ha!" when a muppet or animated character remembers of thinks of the correct answer. It is a musical tone which signals a character's moment of understanding. Becomeing a cognizant of cues such as this and their use in our show, gives the teacher a tool which can enhance auditory and language skills of the children.

We are also in the process of developing an Activity Manual, which is based on the Sesame Street Curriculum. It will include activities which will have adaptations for children with specific special needs and activities which can be played by disabled and non-disabled children together.

Finally, I'd like to add that your input to us is needed and wanted. Our shows and materials are produced and changed, many times, due to feedback and anecdotal information from parents, teachers AND children. I am a Special Educator who works for CTW - an organization which is a continuous experiment in television programming for children that is entertaining and educational. I am a Special Educator who works for CES, a division of the workshop, which is the connecting link between our productions and you.

I ask you to help me that we both might improve programs for the children we have chosen to serve.

Thank you